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NOTES ON THE SNANAIMUQ.

BY DR. FRANZ BOAS.

The following notes were made during an ethnological reconnaissance on the coast of British Columbia in the winter of 1886-'87. The author remained among the Snanaimuq only a few days in order to collect a vocabulary. No attempt has been made to study the customs and religion of this tribe systematically, which accounts for the disconnected character of the following notes.

The Snanaimuq are one of the numerous tribes belonging to the group of the Coast Salish, who occupy the coast of British Columbia on both sides of the Gulf of Georgia, the coasts of Puget Sound, and the eastern part of Juan de Fuca Strait. The dialect of the Snanaimuq is spoken by a great number of tribes—on Vancouver Island from Nōnō's Bay to the west side of Sanich Inlet, on the mainland in the delta of Fraser River, and as far east as Yale. There are slight differences of dialect in this region, such as we should call provincialisms. The Snanaimuq are called by the Čatlōltq of Comox, "Nanai'mō."

The territory of the tribe embraces Nanaimo Harbor as far north as Five Finger Island and as far south as Dodds Narrows. The coast strip from Dodds Narrows to Yellow Point belongs to both the Snanaimuq and Qalältq. The basin of Nanaimo River and Gabriola Island belong to the Snanaimuq.

The tribe consists of five clans—Tē'wētqēn, Yē'cēqēn, *Koltsi'owotl*, Osā'lōql, Anuē'nes. Each of these has its own chief, while in time of war a war chief leads the warriors of the whole tribe.

The child belongs to the clan of the father. After the death of the chief, the chieftancy devolves upon his eldest son. If he had no son, the eldest daughter takes his place until her son is able to fill his grandfather's place. If the chief dies childless, the eldest son of the chief's younger brother or of his younger sister succeeds him. The father's property is equally divided among his children.

When a woman is to be delivered, all the women are invited to come and to rub shredded cedar bark, which is used for washing and bedding the babe. Two women, the wives of chiefs, wash the newborn babe. All those who do any work on behalf of the mother

or of the child are paid with pieces of mountain-goat blanket. The mother must not eat anything but dried salmon, and is not allowed to go near a river. The children are not named until they are several years old; then all the clans of the tribe are invited, and at the ensuing festival the child receives the name of his grandfather, or that of another old member of the clan. Names once given are not changed, except when that of a chief is assumed by his son.

The marriage ceremonies are as follows: The man who wants to marry a girl goes into the house of her parents and sits down close by the door without speaking a word. There he sits four days without eating any food. For three days the girl's parents abuse him in every way, but on the fourth day they feign to be moved by his perseverance, and the girl's mother gives him a mat to sit on. In the evening of the fourth day the girl's parents call on the chief of the gens and request his wife to invite the young man to sit near the fire. Then he knows that the parents will give their consent to the marriage. A meal is cooked; some food is served to the young man, and some is sent to his parents in order to advise them of the consent of the girl's family. The latter, on receiving the food, accept it, and turn at once to cooking a meal. They fill the empty dishes in which the food was sent, and return them to the girl's parents. Then both families jointly give a great feast. The young man's parents load their boat with mountain-sheep blankets and other valuable presents; they leave the landing place of their house, and land at that of the bride's house. They are accompanied by members of their gens. Meanwhile the bride's gens has assembled in her house. The chiefs of the groom's gens deliver the presents to the bride's parents, making a long and elaborate speech. In return, the bride's parents present these chiefs with a few blankets, which are handed to them by the chiefs of their gens. Then the groom's gens is invited to partake of a great feast. After these ceremonies the young man and his gens return to the boat and stay for a few hours on the water. Meanwhile the bride is intrusted to the care of the highest chief of her gens, who takes her by the hand, carrying an elaborately carved rattle of mountain-goat horn in the other. Besides this, he carries a mat for the bride to sit on. Then the highest chief of the other gens takes her from the hands of the former and leads her into the boat. The presents given by the parents of the young man are restored, later on, in the same proportion by the bride's parents.

While these formal ceremonies are always observed when both parties are of high rank, in other cases, if both parents are of the same rank, the marriage is sometimes celebrated only by a feast and by a payment of the value of about forty blankets to the bride's parents by those of the groom. In this case also the presents are restored later on.

If the families are of different social standing, the whole gens of the parents who are of higher rank may go to the young couple and recover the husband or wife, as the case may be. This is considered a divorce. Or the chiefs of the offended gens summon a council, and the case is settled by a payment of blankets.

Mortuary Customs.—The face of the deceased is painted red and black. The corpse is put into a box, which is placed on four posts about five feet above the ground. In rare instances only the boxes are fastened in the tops of trees, which are made inaccessible by cutting off the lower branches. Members of a gens are buried near each other; near relatives, sometimes in a small house, in which the boxes are placed. A chief's body is put into a carved box, and the front posts supporting his grave are carved. His mask is placed between these posts. The graves of great warriors are marked by a statue representing a warrior with a war-club. There is nothing to distinguish a shaman's grave from that of an ordinary man. The mourners must move very slowly. They are not allowed to go near the water, or to eat the heads of salmon. They must cook and eat alone, and not use the fire and the dishes which other people use. Every morning they go down to the beach and wail for the dead. After the death of a young child the parents cut off their hair; but there is no other ceremony.

After the death of husband or wife the survivor must paint his legs and his blanket red. For three or four days he must not eat anything; then three men or women give him food, and henceforth he is allowed to eat. Twice every day he must take a bath, in which he (or she) is assisted by two men (or women). At the end of the mourning period the red blanket is given to an old man, who deposits it in the woods.

At the death of the chief the whole tribe mourns. Four days after the death has occurred the whole tribe assembles, and all take a bath which concludes the mourning.

The chief's son, some time after his father's death, adopts the latter's name. For this purpose he invites all the neighboring tribes to a

“potlatch,” the character of which was so well described by G. M. Dawson in his “Notes on the Kwakiool” (Trans. Roy. Soc. Can. 1887, Sec. II). The Snanaimuq have a permanent scaffold erected in front of their houses, on which a chief stands, assisted by two slaves, who distribute the presents to be given among the guests, who stand or sit below. As it is necessary to give a festival at the assumption of the chief’s name, the new chief continues sometimes for years and years to accumulate wealth for the purpose of celebrating this event. At the festival his father’s name is given him by four chiefs of foreign tribes.

The potlatch is considered a means of acquiring rank or of restoring honor. If some misfortune has befallen a man, or if he has been ridiculed by a neighbor, he will destroy a certain number of blankets and thus restore his honor; or he will throw the blankets away and his friends will destroy them.

The gentes of the Snanaimuq are not all of equal rank. The *Tē’wētgēn* and the *Yē’cēgēn* are considered the noblest. They alone are allowed to use masks, which are called *sqoā’ēqoē* and represent either beavers, or ducks and spring salmon. These masks are not used by all tribes speaking the Snanaimuq dialect, but this is a privilege of the Snanaimuq, *Pēnā’legats*, *Qnusikoyim*, *Kui’kōtlēm*, and *Koā’tl*.

Formerly the Snanaimuq were a very warlike tribe. Their warriors were thoroughly trained. They were not allowed to eat while on the war-path. Before setting out on such an expedition they painted their faces red and black. When near the village they intended to attack, the party divided; one-half hid in the woods behind the village, while the others watched in their canoes. When the latter gave a sign, both parties attacked the village. When successful, the men were killed, the women and children carried off as slaves. The heads of the slain were cut off, taken home, and planted on poles in front of the houses,

It may be of interest to hear the history of one of these wars that raged for many years about the middle of this century, as told by a chief of the Snanaimuq. *Koā’élite*, a chief of the *Si’ciatl*, had a daughter who was the wife of a chief of the Snanaimuq. Once upon a time the former tribe was attacked by the *Lē’kwiltoč*, and many men had been killed. Then *Koā’élite* sent to the chief of the Snanaimuq and called upon him for help. They set out jointly, and met the *Lē’kwiltoč* at *Qu’sam* (Salmon River). In the ensu-

ing struggle the Si'ciatl and Snanaimuq were victorious, but many of their warriors were killed. They brought home many heads of their enemies. The friends of the Snanaimuq, however, were sad when they heard of the death of so many of their friends, and they resolved to take revenge. They all—the Pēnā'leqats, T'ā'tēkē, Yeqo'laoq, Qelā'ltq, Čēk'ēmē'n, Snōnō'os, Snanai'muq, and Si'ciatl—gathered, and made war upon the Lē'kwiltoč. Another battle was fought at Qu'sam, in which the Lē'kwiltoč were utterly defeated, and in which many slaves were captured. Now, the Lē'kwiltoč called upon their northern neighbors for help. They were greatly reduced in numbers. Of the Tlaa'luis, only three were left. Then these tribes went south to take revenge and were victorious in a number of battles fought with the southern tribes, who had meanwhile been joined by the tribes of Puget Sound. While the war was thus raging with alternating success, part of the tribes on Vancouver Island had removed to the upper part of Cowitchin River, others to Nanaimo River, still others to the mainland. Posts were continually maintained to keep the tribes informed of the movements of the Lē'kwiltoč and their allies. Once the latter had unexpectedly made an expedition southward before the tribes were able to gather. They had gone past Fraser River to Puget Sound, and had massacred the tribes of that region. Meanwhile those assembled on Cowitchin River had sent word to the tribes on Fraser River, and summoned them to come to the island. They told them to pass through Cowitchin Gap, and to look on the shallow beach on the north side of this channel for a signal. They obeyed. Meanwhile all the tribes on the island had assembled, and determined to await the return of the Lē'kwiltoč in Maple Bay. To indicate this they erected a pole, sprinkled with the blood of a blue jay, at the beach in Cowitchin Gap, and made it point towards Maple Bay. Thus they all assembled. Early one morning they heard the Lē'kwiltoč coming. They sung songs of victory. Unexpectedly they were attacked. Almost all of them were slaughtered, their canoes sunk, and women and children enslaved. A few reached the shore, but were starved near Comox. This was the last great battle of the war. The narrator's father made peace with the northern tribes. He was the first to settle again on Gabriola Island. He emancipated his slaves. When peace was made the chiefs made their peoples intermarry.

I cannot give a detailed description of the religion and mythology of the Snanaimuq. They consider the sun the supreme being, and

call him Sēmcā'cēt. They pray to him, and thank him for food and fair weather, but they do not make any offerings. As a sign of their regard, they do not eat breakfast until he is high up in the sky.

The general prayer is the following :

â siä'm, äi kuä'tl k'ur yiha'l'kätçuq a tēn siälém, äi kuätl yitsetsaua'-
Oh chief, good if you guide us the road, good if you have pity
maçuq.
upon us.

Evidently sun-worship is at the foundation of the religious ceremonies of the Salish tribes as well as of the Kwakiutl.

Among the mythical beings I may mention Qäls, the great wanderer, who transformed the beings which originally inhabited the earth into animals, and had many a remarkable adventure. He corresponds to *Kanikila* of the Kwakiutl, and some of the legends told by G. M. Dawson as referring to the latter are also told of him. At the same time he is considered the deity. The mink plays an important part in the mythology of this tribe, and many a legend refers to the fabulous thunder-bird and to the *S'ē'tlkēi*, the double-headed snake. Sickness is produced by the touch of the ghosts, who, according to the belief of the Snanaimuq, appear in the shape of owls. The sick are cured by the shamans, who do not use rattles in their incantations. Shamans acquire their art by encounters with spirits, for whose apparition the novice prepares himself by long-continued bathing in lakes and by rubbing the body with cedar twigs "to remove all bad smell."

I give here two traditions of the Snanaimuq which are of interest in a study of the diffusion of tales. The first has been recorded by A. Krause in Lynn Channel, Alaska, while the second is a peculiarly modified form of the well-known Tlingit legend of the origin of the daylight.

I.—THE MAN AND THE WHALE.

A harpooner went sealing every day. He had caught a great many seals, and returned home. Then he invited all his friends to dinner. When they had finished their meal, his wife descended to the beach, intending to clean the dishes, and to throw away the remains. She gathered her blanket around her, and went a few steps into the water to wash a seal-skin. Then, all of a sudden, a killer (*Delphinus orca*) appeared, took her on his back, and swam

away. Her husband heard her crying for kelp; but, when he had reached the beach and launched his boat, the killer was almost out of sight. He summoned his friends, and they went in pursuit; but soon they saw the killer dive, taking the woman to the bottom of the sea. When they came to the place where this had happened, the husband tied a rope of deer-skin around his waist, and said to his friends, "Stay you here and hold to this rope. I shall descend to the bottom of the sea and recover my wife. Do not haul in the rope until I return." Then he jumped into the water. When he arrived at the bottom of the sea he found a trail, which he followed. After awhile he met a number of old women, one of whom dished out food to the rest. The man saw that they were blind, and took the full dishes from the hands of the old woman. After she thought each of her companions had received her share, she asked, "Have all of you got your dinner?" They replied, "No, we have not got anything." Then they smelled the stranger, and said, "Oh, let us see you, O stranger!" The latter asked, "Now, tell me, grandmothers, did not somebody go past here carrying a woman?" They answered, "Oh, yes! they went to the house of the killer." In reward the man opened their eyes. Then they said to him, "Beware of the crane!" "Never mind," replied the man, "I have my fish-spear with me."

He walked on, and met the crane, who sat near the fire and warmed his back. The chief pushed him with his foot, and the crane fell into the fire and burnt his back. He cried with pain. "Tell me, crane," said the man, "did not somebody go past here carrying my wife?" "Yes, they went to the house of the killer," answered the crane. Then the man cured him of his pain, and gave him his fish-spear in reward. The crane warned him of the slave.

The man walked on, and arrived at the place where the killer's slave split wood for fuel. Then he crawled underneath the log, and broke the point of the wedge. When the slave saw this he began to cry, and said, "Oh! it is growing dark, and I have not finished my work. Certainly my master will punish me." Then the man came forth, and the slave said, "What is your name, O chief! Where do you come from?" "I come to look for my wife." "I am fetching wood here for my master, who wants to cook and to eat her. Oh! have pity upon me, and mend my wedge, else master will kill me." The man complied with his re-

quest, and the slave said, "I will help you to recover your wife. Watch until he sends me for water. When I return, I shall feign to stumble, and pour the water into the fire. Then jump for your wife, and make your escape." The man followed the slave's advice. The latter poured the water into the fire, and then the man and his wife escaped. When the killer was aware that they were gone he commanded the crane to kill him. He, however, intentionally missed him. The man and his wife arrived at the rope. They pulled it, and his friends hauled it in. They returned home at once. In vain the killer pursued them. They had a long start, and reached home safely.

II.—THE ORIGIN OF DAYLIGHT.

A long time ago there was no daylight, for the gull kept it in a small box which he watched jealously. His cousin, the raven, however, was anxious to obtain the daylight. One day when walking with the gull he thought: "Oh, I wish the gull would run a thorn into his foot!" As soon as he had thought so the gull cried with pain, having stepped upon a sharp thorn. The raven said: "Let me see, I will take out the thorn." He was, however, unable to see it, as it was dark, and so he asked the gull to open the lid of the box and to make it light. The gull opened the box very little, so that a faint ray of light came out of it. The raven pretended not to be able to see the thorn, and, instead of pulling it out, pushed it deeper and deeper into the gull's foot, saying: "You must give me more light." The gull cried: *Sqenā'n, sqenā'n!* (my foot, my foot!) and at last opened the box. Thus the day light was set free, and since that time we have had day and night.